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SENATE MEMORIAL 31

49TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2009

INTRODUCED BY

Gerald P. Ortiz y Pino

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE VETERANS' SERVICES DEPARTMENT TO STUDY THE
EFFICACY OF USING ACUPUNCTURE TO TREAT POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS
DISORDER AND PAIN IN VETERANS.

WHEREAS, members of the United States armed forces serve
their country with honor and courage; and

WHEREAS, the United States is currently engaged in two
wars that are very different from past wars, and military
personnel are involved not just in ground combat actions but in
extremely hazardous security duty; and

WHEREAS, the constant need for hypervigilance against
possible terrorist actions and the uncertainty of knowing
whether someone is a terrorist or a civilian means that our
soldiers today, like our soldiers in Vietnam, are paying an
enormous mental and psychological price to serve their country;

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1 and

2 WHEREAS, one such price is post-traumatic stress disorder,
3 a debilitating and disruptive condition that too often leads to
4 broken relationships, psychiatric breakdown and suicide; and

5 WHEREAS, the few studies that have been conducted on the
6 use of acupuncture to treat post-traumatic stress disorder
7 symptoms, including anxiety, insomnia and depression, as well
8 as pain, indicate that acupuncture is a viable treatment
9 modality, and this year the United States air force will begin
10 to use battlefield acupuncture to help wounded and stressed
11 soldiers; and

12 WHEREAS, the United States army hospital, Walter Reed army
13 medical center, conducted a study on the use of acupuncture and
14 found that "[a]cupuncture, which has few known side effects,
15 holds promise as an effective treatment option for PTSD.
16 Acupuncture has been shown to improve well-being and has been
17 successfully used to treat stress, anxiety and pain
18 conditions."; and

19 WHEREAS, acupuncture is a simple, low-cost procedure that
20 offers immediate and effective results and that works
21 harmoniously with other more conventional modalities, such as
22 counseling and medication; and

23 WHEREAS, the veterans project began as a free pilot clinic
24 conducted by New Mexico-licensed acupuncturists in Albuquerque
25 in 2006 to provide acupuncture to New Mexico veterans suffering

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1 from post-traumatic stress disorder and pain; and

2 WHEREAS, veterans in the project are reporting less
3 insomnia and fewer nightmares, improved mental clarity, less
4 anxiety and a reduction in stress;

5 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE
6 OF NEW MEXICO that the veterans' services department be
7 requested to conduct a local study of the efficacy of using
8 acupuncture to treat post-traumatic stress disorder and pain in
9 New Mexico veterans; and

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study consider the
11 relationship between acupuncture treatment and a reduced need
12 for medication and whether the use of low-cost acupuncture
13 clinics eases the strain on mainstream medical facilities; and

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department cooperate with
15 local New Mexico-licensed acupuncturists who have worked
16 extensively with veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress
17 disorder and pain; and

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department seek the
19 assistance and cooperation of the veterans hospital in
20 Albuquerque in conducting the study; and

21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be
22 transmitted to the secretary of veterans' services.